



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 139<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 14 – 18.10.2018

## Side event

### *Legislating on food and nutrition: Lessons learned, challenges and opportunities for parliamentary action*

*Tuesday, 16 October 2018, 1 – 2.30 p.m.  
Room 18, Floor -1, CICC*

Co-organized by IPU, WHO, PMNCH, FAO and the SUN Movement

#### **Concept note**

Poor nutrition and unhealthy diet are the leading risk factors for death and disability worldwide. Every country has a malnutrition challenge. Malnutrition affects one in three people in the world. In 2017, approximately 38 million children under five years were overweight or obese, while concurrently 151 million were chronically malnourished (stunted) and 51 million acutely malnourished. Malnutrition in all its forms is also a threat to the health of adolescents, especially girls. Prevalence of moderate/severe thinness among adolescent girls across low- and middle-income countries, iron deficiency anaemia and excess weight and obesity, as well as the increased risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are affecting this age group.

Nutrition is a maker and marker of sustainable development and the lynchpin that can help drive achievement of many if not all of the SDGs. Every \$1 invested in nutrition yields \$16 in benefits across health and productivity. Ensuring universal access to essential nutrition services will be fundamental for achieving SDG target 3.8 on Universal Health Coverage (UHC). To comprehensively achieve the ambition of zero hunger and end malnutrition in all its forms, a focus on sustainable and healthy food systems is also crucial.

Parliamentarians and parliaments as institutions are critical in making the SDG ambitions a reality. By adopting and enforcing nutrition-relevant legislation and ensuring that adequate budget is allocated, they can protect public health, ensure nutrition becomes a political priority, and promote human rights.

In 2014, the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) meeting of parliamentarians called on parliaments to "develop legislation and oversee regulations to create health-promoting environments and encourage healthy choices for all". This side-event will build on the ICN2 outcomes and discuss the pivotal role of parliamentarians in addressing malnutrition in all its forms through legislative measures. It aims at fostering sharing and learning amongst MPs by showcasing successful examples on how nutrition legislation and policies helped advance nutrition in diverse national contexts. It will also encourage political commitment and domestic investments for tackling malnutrition in all its forms with a specific focus on legislative actions.

The session will address the following questions:

- What are the areas most in need of legislative action and where can it have the greatest impact (best buys)?
- How can parliamentarians learn from each other and have an exchange on specific nutrition regulations and legislative actions?
- How can adolescents and youth support parliamentarians and vice-versa?

#IPU139